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CAMBODIA: Deputy Prime Minister Matak is an increasingly controversial figure. (Page 2)

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CAMBODIA: Deputy Prime Minister Matak apparently is becoming an increasingly controversial political figure, although his position still appears secure.

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Matak reportedly is also being blamed by some of the government's important backers for the regime's failure to reduce corruption and curb inflation. His unsuccessful attempt to impose press censorship rankled elements of the intelligentsia, who viewed it as a personal political maneuver.

Besides his royal family ties and his official position, Matak's sometimes abrasive style certainly contributes to his unpopularity. It may well be that the criticism being leveled at him also stems in part from dissatisfaction over Cambodia's lack of success on the battlefield and over the government's failure to rid itself of some of the corrupt practices and personalities carried over from the Sihanouk era.

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